

School Based Management: Concept Development and its Implementation in Indonesia

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Abstract

School based management is the main issues in the educational quality improvement of both elementary and secondary education institutions in the world in the last three decades. It is the alternative school management believed to be potentially able to elevate the education quality. In Indonesia, it was introduced as early as the end of 1999 following the enactment of the decentralization policy. School based management, which is seen as a panacea of Indonesian education problems especially from primary up to senior secondary schools, when the 2003 Education Law No 20 was introduced, Indonesia formally adopted a policy of "school-based management" for the quality improvement of its 227.298 public and private schools, and madrasahs (Islamic schools), 47.813.166 students and 3.218.754 teachers. SBM in Indonesia is focused on the four aspects of basic education: quality, equality, relevance and efficiency. While international research has not yet proved conclusively that school-based management improves student outcomes, but in Indonesia, the experience has been to a certain degree more positive.

Abstrak

Manajemen berbasis sekolah menjadi isu utama tentang peningkatan kualitas pendidikan baik di tingkat dasar maupun tingkat menengah di dunia dalam tiga dekade terakhir. MBS ini merupakan manajemen sekolah alternatif yang dipercaya berpotensi mampu meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan. Di Indonesia, MBS diperkenalkan di awal-awal tahun 1999 mengikuti penerapan kebijakan desentralisasi. MBS dipandang sebagai sebuah jalan keluar bagi permasalahan pendidikan Indonesia khususnya dari tingkat Sekolah Dasar sampai tingkat SMA. Ketika Undang-Undang Pendidikan No. 20 tahun 2003 dikeluarkan, Indonesia secara formal mengadopsi kebijakan MBS untuk peningkatan kualitas 227.298 sekolah dan madrasah negeri dan swasta, 47.813.166 siswa dan 3.218.754 guru. MBS di Indonesia terfokus pada empat aspek pendidikan dasar:

kualitas, kesetaraan, relevansi dan efisiensi. Meskipun penelitian internasional belum membuktikan secara konklusif bahwa MBS dapat meningkatkan hasil belajar siswa, tapi di Indonesia, pada tingkat tertentu justru memiliki pengaruh yang lebih positif.

Key Words: *School based management, decentralization, education quality, educational planing, and primary and secondary schools.*

A. Introduction

School-Based Management (SBM) has become the most prominent feature of public school management systems in most countries around the world. In Indonesia, the collapse of New Order's regime in 1998 brought significant change to Indonesia's public sector, education sector is not an exception. To make betterment of the education quality in Indonesia, especially after it suffered the so called multi-dimension crises immediately after Soeharto's fall in late 1990's, which lasted longer than its neighbor countries in South East Asia such as Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, Brunei Darussalam, and Malaysia, the Indonesian government enacted the Law of Autonomy Regional Government (Law No. 22 year 1999). At the same time, the government of Indonesia changes its educational policy from centralized system to decentralized one.

In line with the enactment of both autonomy regional government and decentralization of education policies, the government of Indonesia, in this case the Department of National Education, which is now changed to be the Ministry of National Education (Law no. 47 year 2009), strongly suggested that school based management (SBM), which is seen as a panacea of Indonesian education problems, should be applied at all school levels, from primary up to senior secondary schools. It is expected, with the turn of the 21st Century, that all Indonesian public schools have implemented SBM.

Creating a good way to achieve such a big goal, the Indonesia central government established a Commission of National Education (*Komisi Nasional Pendidikan*) in February 2001 on the basis of Law 22/1999 by which education was decentralized. The Commission recommended the formation of school councils at the school level to improve quality of national education. The Government then embarked on the formation of school councils in Western Sumatera, Eastern Java, and Bali. On the basis of these trials, the councils were considered

strategic in promoting democratic principles in schools, creating higher levels of parental participation in school governance, and improving the quality of national education. For these reasons, in 2002 and 2004, the Government provided a set of guidelines to establish mandatory corporate governing body type school councils in accordance with the Law 22/1999, the Commission and Education Act 20/2003.

This paper, therefore, deals with the concept of decentralisation, school based management, and the implementation of SBM in the redeveloped countries with a special emphasize on SBM in United States of America where it was introduced and implemented for the first time in 1980's, and other developing countries such as India, Pakistan, with an emphasize and focus on Indonesian context. Namely, the development and implementation of the school based management in Indonesia during the first decade of the 21st century.

B. Decentralization of Education

In the last three decades the governments around the world, as a part of improving educational quality,¹ are introducing a range of strategies aimed at improving the financing and delivery of education services, and have recently added an emphasis on improving quality as well as increasing quantity (in terms of enrolment rates). The decentralization of educational decision-making is one such strategy. Advocates of this strategy maintain that decentralizing decision-making encourages demand and ensures that schools reflect local priorities and values. By giving a voice and decision-making power to local stakeholders who know more about the local education systems than central policy makers, decentralization can improve educational outcomes and increase client satisfaction. In short, decentralization of education Indonesia is aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness something that can be done fully in the centralized educational system this because as stated by Baker that "over-centralized system do not cope well with rapid changes; local management schools; ...will help them to cope."²

One way to decentralize decision-making power in education is popularly known as School-Based Management (SBM). There are other definitions and names for this concept, but they all generally refer to the decentralization of authority from the central government to the school level. SBM emphasizes the individual school (as represented by any combination of principals, teachers, parents, students, and other members of the school community) as the primary unit for improving education and the redistribution of decision-making authority over

school operations as the primary means by which this improvement can be stimulated and sustained.³

Although SBM-type reforms have been introduced in countries such as Australia, Canada, Israel, and the United States since some 30 years ago, in Indonesia it is considered as a new term in its educational management system. It was not popular until it was introduced and obliged to be implemented at all school levels : primary schools, junior high schools, and senior high schools in early 2000's.

There are many reasons for this popularity. Among other things, SBM has the potential to be a low cost way of making public spending on education more efficient by increasing the accountability of the agents involved and by empowering the clients to improve learning outcomes. And by putting power in the hands of the end users of the service (education), SBM eventually leads to better school management that is more cognizant of and responsive to the needs of those end users, thus in creating a better and more conducive learning environment for the students.⁴

The potential benefits of such a system (SBM) are high at only marginal cost. These benefits can include:

- a) More input and resources from parents (whether in cash or in kind);
- b) More effective use of resources since those making the decisions for each school are intimately acquainted with its needs;
- c) Better quality education as a result of the more efficient and transparent use of resources;
- d) A more open and welcoming school environment since the community is involved in its management;
- e) Increased participation of all local stakeholders in decision-making processes, leading to a more collegial relationship and increased satisfaction;
- f) Improved student performance as a result of reduced repetition rates, reduced dropout rates and (eventually) better learning outcomes.⁵

A similar tone on the advantages of school-based management is shared by John T. Seyfarth in his *Human Resources Management for Effective Schools*. He clearly states that :

The claimed advantages include better programs for students; full use of human resources; higher-quality decisions; increased staff professionalism, satisfaction, loyalty, and commitment; development of staff leadership skills; clear organizational goals; improved communication; support for staff creativity and innovation, greater

public confidence; enhanced fiscal accountability; and higher student achievement.⁶

Realizing the potential advantages of the school-based management, Indonesia has applied decentralization of its education system since 1999, and it has been strengthened further by the enactment of the Law of Education (*Undang-Undang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*) No. 20 Year 2003, and Law of Teacher and Lecturer (*Undang-Undang Guru dan Dosen*) No. 14 Year 2005.

C. School Based Management : Theoretical Aspects

The idea of SBM has its base in educational decentralisation as previously discussed above. Decentralisation means "the transfer of planning, decision-making, or administrative authority from the central government to its field organizations, local administrative units, semi-autonomous and parasitical organizations, local governments, or nongovernmental organizations."⁷ From this definition, the decentralisation of authority from the central government to schools is then popularly known as SBM. Thus, it can be safely stated that SBM is essentially the transfer of decision-making and/or authority over school governance from the government to the school level.⁸

In terms of the features, the SBM has several features. One of the common features of SBM reforms in East Asia, in which Indonesia is included, is that the vehicles of school governance and management are, in most cases, school committees and community councils consisting of community members.⁹ School committees are given part of decision-making authority over day-to-day school operations. Despite this commonality, even across the countries in the region, the levels and types of SBM vary from one country to another, partly according to the motivations behind the reforms. For example, SBM reforms in Hong Kong aim to increase accountability and participatory decision-making at the school level; schools in Hong Kong have been given a high degree of autonomy over budgeting and staffing, receiving lump sum funds and grants from the government. On the other hand, schools in Cambodia and Thailand have less autonomy regarding finances and control of resources.¹⁰

1) Definition

Recently there is no dearth of books on school based managements, not only in English but also in Bahasa Indonesia by Indonesian experts on educational planning, administration and management. For instance those of Mulyasa, Fatah, Suderadjat, and

Damin.¹¹ Henceforth there are many definitions offered about the SBM among of them SBM is the decentralization of authority from the central government to the school level (Caldwell, 2005).¹² In the words of Malen, *et al.* (1990), "School-based management can be viewed conceptually as a formal alteration of governance structures, as a form of decentralization that identifies the individual school as the primary unit of improvement and relies on the redistribution of decision-making authority as the primary means through which improvement might be stimulated and sustained."¹³ Meanwhile, Ahmad is of the opinion that SBM is a strategic policy initiative to transfer greater degree of authority from the top to the smallest unit of organization of the education system, that is, albeit the principal, headmasters and teachers.¹⁴ Thus, in SBM, responsibility for, and decision-making authority over, school operations is transferred to principals, teachers, and parents, and sometimes to students and other school community members (*What is SBM?*, World Bank, 2008).

The Significance of School Based Management

Shoraku in his *Educational Movement Toward School-based Management in East Asia* states that there are wide-ranging rationales that explain the significance of SBM.¹⁵ The most important rationales are as follow:

First, advocates of SBM argue that SBM fosters educational demand in the community. They emphasise that SBM ensures that schools provide the social and economic benefits that are more responsive to the priorities and values of those in local communities (World Bank 2007). One of the simplest theories for SBM is that people who primarily benefit from education (i.e., children, their parents, and other community members) should have a say in the provision of education.¹⁶

Second, in an economic crisis, many governments have found themselves incompetent to guarantee the quality of education in the daily workings of the very bottom of the educational bureaucracy (i.e., at the school level) (Shaffer 1994). To supplement this financial shortage, deploying limited financial and human resources, and sharing costs become more the focus.¹⁷

Third, advocates for the reforms emphasise that by giving local authorities decision-making authority over school management, they become aware of educational problems such as low enrolment, attendance and academic performance, and begin to realise key disincentives to schooling (Uemura 1999). For example, the deterrents to

schooling may be inappropriate school calendars, inflexible school hours and out-of-date curricula, rather than an inadequate supply of learning materials. By appropriately identifying problems, inefficient use of limited educational resources can be avoided.

2) Principles and Strategies of School Based managements

According to Ahmad¹⁸ that there are at least three strategies need to be strengthened for effective policy initiative under SBM model : institutional leadership strategy, delegation authority and power, and process devolution.

Firstly, in institutional leadership strategy, the steps to be taken into account are :

- a) Need to emphasize the institutional; direction of school and curriculum in terms of vision, mission, objectives and output.
- b) Nee to clarify ideas about critical leadership role, functions, responsibilities and expectations of society.
- c) Need to clarify ideas about leadership roles of external key players in the organizational system of education.
- d) Need to formulate strategies of policy implementation for leadership standards with performance-based criteria and outcome performance indicators at the school.
- e) Need to promote the use of research evidence for school improvement programs, both in human resources and infrastructure development.
- f) Need for professional knowledge base in terms of school base data and information and uses within school context.
- g) Need to foster experimental leadership skills in terms of decision making, effective strategies for implementation and monitoring of school development and events.

Secondly, the delegation of authority through the distribution to of powers from the central agencies (Minister/Director General/Divisions Ministry of Education) to the state, divisional, provincial.

Thirdly, SBM is affective through the process of devolution, which implies that something is given back the organization from which it had been taken. It provides greater opportunity for clearer delegation of functions for institutions to operate must conform to national goals and objectives.

3) School-Based Management Program Evaluations

In order to appropriately judge the effectiveness and the impact of the school-based management, a good evaluation should be provided. Although there perhaps many instruments of the evaluation can be offered, in general terms, a good evaluation should at least include the following three important steps¹⁹ :

- a). *A clear definition of the intervention.* All interventions modify margins and incentives differently for different stakeholders. It is critical to define what is being modified in the program, the new set of incentives, and to whom the modifications apply.
- b). *A description of how the intervention is expected to achieve the final desired outputs.* Understanding how the intervention will lead to the desired result is fundamental for the evaluation. In general terms, sound economic theory should guide the analysis of how the intervention will affect the desired outcomes.
- c). *A definition of the identification strategy.* An identification strategy is the mechanism by which it is possible to attribute causal effects between an intervention (for example, the SBM program) and a set of outcome variables (for example, educational outcomes such as dropout rates or standardized test scores). In order to be able to attribute changes in outcome variables to the program, it is necessary to overcome the problems of self-selection.

D. The Implementation of School Based Management

Having touched upon the theoretical aspects of the school based management, the following paragraphs will deal with the practical aspect the school based management as being implemented in the schools in both developed and developing countries.

1. The Implementation of the School Based Management in the Developed Countries : A Case of United States of America

Among the schools in developed countries such as Australia, Canada, and Japan, the case with the schools in the United States of America is taken as an example on how the school based management has been implemented. Now it is eleven years ago Fullan and Watson (1999) reviewed several empirical studies involving SBM, concluding that SBM, in its then present form, did not impact teaching and learning.²⁰ They mention three of the more carefully conducted studies here. For example, Taylor & Teddlie (1992) examined classrooms in thirty-three schools in the United States — of these, 16 schools had established SBM programs as part of a new pilot project initiative, and 17 schools served as a control group which had not adopted SBM. The 33 schools were

from the same district. Taylor and Teddlie did find that teachers in this study did not alter their practice ... increasing their participation in decision-making did not overcome norms of autonomy so that teachers would feel empowered to collaborate with their colleagues.²¹

Other evidence from classroom observation failed to indicate changes in classroom environment and student learning activities. Despite considerable rhetoric and what the authors saw as 'a genuine desire to professionalize teaching', 'the core mission of the school seemed ancillary to the SBM project'.²² Again, substantive change in the pedagogy (teaching strategies and assessment), and in the way teachers worked together on instructional matters proved to be elusive. These findings would not be as noteworthy, claim the authors, except for the fact that 'the study occurred in a district recognized nationally as a leader in implementing restructuring reforms'.²³ Similarly, Hallinger, Murphy and Hausman, (in Fullan and Watson, 1999) found that teachers and principals in their sample were highly in favour of restructuring, but did not make connections 'between new governance structures and the teaching-learning process'.

Virtually identical findings arise in Weiss' (1992) investigation of shared decision-making (SDM) in twelve high schools in eleven states in the US (half were selected because they had implemented SBM; the other half were run in a traditional principal-led manner). Weiss did find that teachers in SBM schools were more likely to mention involvement in the decision-making process (i.e., composition of committees, procedures, etc.) but 'schools with SDM did not pay more attention to issues of curriculum than traditionally managed schools, and pedagogical issues and student concerns were low on the list for both sets of schools'.²⁴ The research since 1993, which focussed directly on SBM, reports essentially the same results on a very thorough review of research. Leithwood and Menzies in Fullan and Watson²⁵ examined 83 empirical studies of school-based management. Building on Murphy and Beck²⁶, Leithwood and Menzies identify four types of SBM: administrative control (the principal is dominant); professional control (teachers are dominant); community control (parent/community dominates) and balanced control (parents and professional are equals). Of the 83 studies reviewed, 28 were classified as administrative, 37 as professional, 33 as community, and 2 as balanced. Leithwood and Menzies' overall conclusion is that: There is virtually no firm, research-based knowledge about the direct or indirect effects of SBM on students ... the little research-based evidence that does exist suggests that the effects on students are just as likely to be negative as positive. There is an

awesome gap between the rhetoric and the reality of SBM's contribution to student growth in light of the widespread advocacy of SBM.²⁷

b. Implementation of School Based Management in Indonesia

Before discussing about the implementation of the school based management in Indonesia, a brief presentation on Indonesian demography in general is worth teaching at least by showing general condition of Indonesia in 2007 through the following table.

Table 1 : General Condition of Indonesia²⁸

1. Government Administration	
a. Provinces	33
b. Districts	465
c. Sub-Districts	6.131
d. Villages	73.408
2. Width Area	1.910.931 Km2
3. Number of Population	225.642.000
a. Based on gender	
1) Males	113.002.723
2) Females	112.639.277
b. Based on Location	
1) Urban	96.806.900
2) Rural	128.835.100
4. GNP (million rupiahs)	1.963.974.300
5. National Budget planning	746.500.000
a. Domestic Revenue	743.800.000
b. Grant	2.700.000
6. Educational Budget	44.058.393
a. Pure Rupiah (Cash)	42.435.853
b. Foreign Loan	1.622.540
7. Percapita Income (rupiahs)	15.508.319,0

With above picture of Indonesian condition background, Indonesia needs to improve all aspects of Indonesian people life, primarily in this context about its education. In the application of a quality education standard, the education quality planning and the understanding of the education quality outlined above gives an implication on the need for education quality standardization and planning. In the business circles, a quality standardization has currently been applied, mainly the management quality resulting in such a quality standard as ISO-9000. This kind of standardization need also be applied in the educational area comprising the seven educational products and their supporting facilities and infrastructures. The standardization could

also be made on the basis of the eleven attributes of education quality described above.

Education in Indonesia has four educational strata: *first*, primary education, public or private, such as Elementary School (*SD*), which includes religious primary education such as Islamic Elementary School (*Ibtidaiyah*) and similar schools. *Second*, lower secondary education, comprising public lower secondary education, such as Public Junior High School (*SMPN*) and private lower secondary education, general, or religious, such as Islamic Junior High School (*Tsanawiyah*) and similar schools. *Third*, upper secondary education comprising public upper secondary education such as Public Senior High School (*SMA/SMU*) and general/vocational, or religious, private upper secondary education, such as Islamic Senior High School (*Aliyah*) and similar schools, and *fourth*, tertiary education comprising public tertiary education such as state or private universities (general, or religious), with the following levels of study: Diploma Program, Strata I (*S1*) Program, Magistrate (*S2*) Program, and Doctorate (*S3*) Program. However, in relation to the implementation of the school management, discussion of higher education is irrelevant. Therefore, the emphasis is given to only primary and secondary education levels.

SBM-type reforms have been introduced in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United States - where communities, through elected bodies variously called boards, councils or committees, set school policy, approve curricula, appoint or participate in the appointment of principals and create school development plans - approximately more than 30 years ago (i.e. in 1980). Similarly, in Asia, Hong Kong introduced school-based management in the early 1990s, followed by Thailand and Malaysia. In Indonesia, however, although basically the National Education Ministry has already introduced school-based management in the late 1990s. Hence in Indonesia it is therefore considered as a new term in its educational management system, it was not popular until it was introduced and obliged to be implemented at all school levels : primary schools, junior high schools, and senior high schools in early 2000's. When the 2003 Education Law No 20 was introduced, Indonesia formally adopted a policy of "school-based management" for the quality improvement of its 227.298 public and private schools, and madrasah (Islamic schools), 47.813.166 students and 3.218.754 teachers as shown in the three consecutive tables in the following page:

Table 2 : The Number of Educational Institutions²⁹

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	Academic Year 2007/2008
Elementary School	165.755
Junior High School	39.160
Senior High School	22.383
Total	227.298

Table 3 : The Number of School Students³⁰

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	Academic Year 2007/2008
Elementary School	29.498.266
Junior High School	10.961.492
Senior High School	7.353.408
Total	47.813.166

Table 4 : The Number of School Teachers³¹

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	Academic Year 2007/2008
Elementary School	1.687.371
Junior High School	876.936
Senior High School	654.447
Total	3.218.754

In introducing and implementing of the school based management, Indonesian department of national education or Ministry of National Education with international bilateral/multilateral agencies, such as UNICEF, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, USAID and AusAID, have been assisting the government in supporting, strengthening and extending school-based management to include governance.

In theory, as the consequence of the enactment of decentralization of education and the implementation of the school based management, this means that principals of these school institutions, from primary up to secondary schools, now manage their respective schools as autonomous units within the national education system, with parents and community members governing schools through representative school committees. In practice, a wide variety of models operates, ranging from schools with nominal school committees, which meet annually to sign off on a budget, to those with fully functioning committees that routinely participate in the school governance

To support the implementation of the SBM, recently the Department of National Education, which is now known as the Ministry of National Education, in this regard the Directorate General of Primary and Secondary Education of the Republic of Indonesia, has introduced a new concept of education and the management of education, which seemed to be quality oriented as contemplated above, i.e., Community-Based Education (PBM) (2003), Competence-Based Curriculum (KBK) (2004), Effective and Pleasant Education, School Level Curriculum (KTSP) (2006).³²

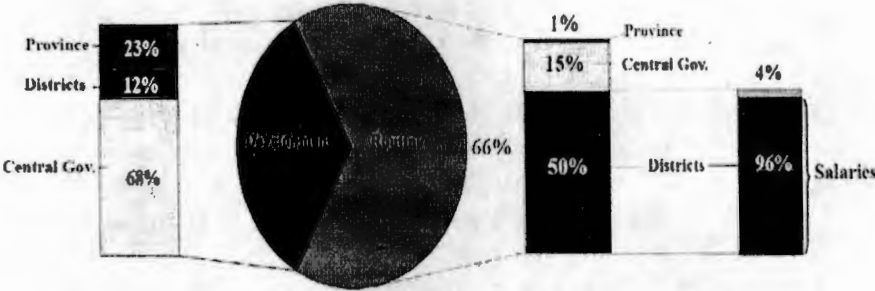
In 2001 when SBM was introduced nationally, managerial and financial responsibilities for all the levels of public schools were delegated to the district level, or the third layer of the five-tier government hierarchy.³³ The entire provincial and district education offices of the Ministry of National Education that had been in charge of school administration and financing were abolished, and district bureaus of education under the Ministry of Interior Administration took over many of the roles that had been assumed by the offices.³⁴ The Ministry of National Education is now in charge only of the formulation of national education policy.³⁵

SBM in Indonesia is targeting four aspects of basic education: quality, equality, relevance and efficiency. In the early 1990s, the equality in basic education of this country showed good progress. However, after the Asian financial crisis, the number of households who lived in poverty or even under the poverty line increased significantly. Subsequently,

many of the children from those families remain uneducated or have much less experience of schooling.³⁶ During the 1990s, huge inequalities remained in the access to a good quality of education. For example, during the period, lower secondary students performed well at the national examinations, on average. Yet, more detailed analysis reveals that the wealthiest provinces, such as Central Java and Yogyakarta, experienced an increase in the scores, while the middle-income and poorest provinces, such as Nusa Tenggara Barat, did not meet the requirements for achievement, and some provinces in fact experienced a decrease³⁷

Prior to SBM reforms, the high percentage of government subsidies worked to reduce the disparity between some prosperous provinces and others with fewer resources. After 2001, when the provincial and district education offices were closed down, the budgeting system was changed. Currently, schools receive government subsidies from the district bureaus of education. The amount of the budget to each school is determined by its immediate district bureau, according to the situations and academic performance of the school.³⁸ In order to receive their budgets, schools are required to formulate annual plans and implementation programmes. The annual plans are submitted first to the county offices, and the county offices submit the plans to the district bureaus.³⁹ The following table 5 shows percentages of expenditure based on hierarchical level of government

Table 5 : Education Spending by Economic Classification, Level of Government, and District Spending Routine Composition – 2005



Importantly, pupils or students, parents and other community members as well as teachers need to participate in the formulation and implementation of the plans and programmes⁴⁰ For the realization of autonomous schools with their participation, a school committee was established in every school in 2002. The committee of each school plays a significant role in school governance. Its roles cover a broad range of

areas. It helps the school determine the minimum standards of academic achievement and the criteria for new enrolments, and recommends the appointment and dismissal of new principals and teachers. Furthermore, the committee monitors the quality of teaching and learning.⁴¹ Each committee consists of a variety of members of the community, including parents, educational experts and alumni, as well as teacher representatives of the school.⁴² The government expects that this style of school management will increase the overall quality of education, and teaching and learning in classrooms will become more relevant to pupils' or students' needs.⁴³

Another strategy to improve needs-relevance is that schools now have some autonomy to develop local curricula. In Indonesia, the central Ministry of National Education was controlling almost every aspect of teaching and learning at the school level, and the ministry formulated the national curriculum. Individual schools did not have much freedom to adapt the curriculum to their local needs. The recent reform, however, set a few subjects, the curriculum of which provincial governments hold the authority to develop. Each school develops course contents of the subjects and tailors its own teaching methods⁴⁴ For example, provinces with many scenic spots such as Yogyakarta can use the subjects to teach about tourism development, which is more likely to match the learning needs of many students.⁴⁵

However, keeping in mind the failure of implantation, to a certain degree, in American school context as discussed above, how about its application in Indonesian? Has school-based management resulted in improved schooling for children? It seems this is not so easy to answer. While international research has not yet proved conclusively that school-based management improves student outcomes, but in Indonesia, the experience has been more positive. Stuart Weston, director of the USAID-funded Managing Basic Education (MBE) project, believes that it is the combination of community participation, new approaches to joyful and active learning, and school-based management that has made the difference. He States that : ""When schools implement all of these new approaches together, we see a new spirit. Everyone works harder. Parents, teachers and children take more pride in their school, and, based on evaluation of student performance in MBE schools, test scores improve,"⁴⁶

The Decentralized Basic Education (DBE) project, also funded by USAID, has been working together with the Indonesian Government and civil society since mid-2005 to improve the quality of schools in up to 100 districts across eight provinces. The evidence is compelling. The first cohort of more than 500 schools has completed school

development plans to improve the quality of the education they provide to children. The process of creating the plans is as important as the outcome. School principals, teachers, parents, community members and representatives of school committees worked together to produce them. Community meetings were held to discuss the plans and to find out what parents and others wanted for their children. More than 12,000 people participated in the development of the plans.⁴⁷ As well as giving parents a voice and a sense of ownership in their children's learning, the process had unexpected outcomes. Even before the plans were completed, local businesses, parents and concerned community members -- on their own initiative -- contributed nearly Rp 4 billion (US\$ 400,000) worth of cash, equipment, materials and services to improve their schools. And the evidence is clear. When parents and communities accept responsibility and get involved, schools become better places for children; social capital is created and the communities themselves are empowered.⁴⁸

Here in Indonesia, there is another imperative for community participation. School-based management aims to make the system more accountable. Efficient and transparent use of funds allocated to education could go a long way towards improving quality in Indonesia's schools. In order to access the new, centrally disbursed, BOS (*Bantuan Operasional Sekolah*) funds, all schools must have a legally constituted school committee which approves the school budget. In many schools the school committee exists only on paper. The chairman of the committee, usually a friend of the principal, signs off on the budget with little or no input.⁴⁹

School-based management enables the community to be actively involved in preparing school-development plans. School committees can approve the annual budget which is based on the school-development plan, and monitor the management of funds and use of school resources. In some more progressive districts, such as Kebumen in Central Java, community members are also involved in the selection of school principals.⁵⁰

D. Concluding Remarks

So, can school-based management work in Indonesia? The answer is, to a certain degree, yes. Ideally, schools are run by the professionals and community working together; managed by a principal and governed by a school committee, comprised of interested parents and community members. The evidence from research conducted internationally is inconclusive about how school-based management improves learning outcomes for children. But the lesson from Indonesia is clear. The Indonesian government's cooperation with USAID,

UNICEF, the World Bank and other bilateral/multilateral organizations and projects demonstrates that this approach does improve the quality of education and makes schools better places for our children.⁵¹

Of course, although the implantation of the school based management in Indonesia is positive one, but other research finding should also be considered. Among them is Shoraku's (2009) most recent finding. He states that "It may be necessary to train teachers, particularly principals, in basic leadership techniques and community organisation skills. Indonesia and Thailand are presently one of the least-prepared groups for SBM. They are trained for teaching in their classrooms, but they are not school management experts or seasoned spokespersons for all the educational stakeholders at the school level. In particular, teachers in rural and remote areas face much more difficulties than their counterparts in urban areas. In conjunction with their efforts to improve their pedagogical skills and knowledge, teachers should receive guidance on how to manage schools effectively (e.g., use of school budgets, financing and community organisation)."

To quote Fullan and Watson (1999) again that school based management is not an end in itself; not a short-term solution; not decentralization. Rather, SBM is a means of altering the capacity of the school and community to make improvements; it is something that will require training, support and other aspects of capacity-building over a period of time; and it is local improvement in the context of natural goals and accountability.

Endnotes:

¹ For an interesting discussion on quality in educational management, see: John West-Burghnam, "Understanding Quality," in Tony Bush and Les Bell, (eds), *The Principles and Practice of Educational Management*, (London: Sage Publication, 2002), pp.313-324.

² K. Baker, "Change is out Ally," dalam "Education and Training, No. 32, Vol.6, (1989), pp.12-17.

³ See: < <http://web.worldbank.org> > (25-10-2009).

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⁵ See: <<http://web.worldbank.org>> (25-10-2009).

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